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ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF AFRICA

edited by

DARYLL FORDE

050

EAST CENTRAL AFRICA

PART II

I BEMBA AND RELATED PEOPLES OF NORTHERN RHODESIA

by

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WITH A CONTRIBUTION ON THE AMBO

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II PEOPLES OF THE LOWER LUAPULA VALLEY

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This study is one part of the Ethnographic Survey of Africa which the International African Institute is preparing with the aid of a grant made by the Secretary of State under the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts, on the recommendation of the Colonial Social Science Research Council

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ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF AFRICA

FOREWORD

122 The preparation of a comprehensive survey of the tribal societies of Africa was discussed by the Executive Council of the Institute as far back as 1927, but the interruption and restricting of its activities caused by the war resulted in the postponement of the project. Events and developments during recent years, however, have led to a wider recognition of the need for collating and making more generally available the wealth of existing but uncoordinated material on the ethnic groupings and social conditions of African peoples, particularly in connection with plans for economic and social development. Moreover, it appeared that the International African Institute, as an international body which has received support from and performed services for the different Colonial governments, was in a very favourable situation for undertaking such a task.

The Institute, therefore, in 1944, applied to the recently established British Colonial Social Science Research Council for a grant from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund to finance the preparation of an Ethnographic Survey of Africa, and a grant was allocated for a period of five years from 1945, and was subsequently extended for a further period of three years. A committee, under the Chairmanship of Professor Radcliffe-Brown, was appointed to consider the scope and form of the survey, and collaboration was established with research institutions in South Africa, Rhodesia, East Africa, French West Africa, Belgium and the Belgian Congo.

121 The aim of the Ethnographic Survey is to present a concise, critical, and accurate account of our present knowledge of the tribal groupings, distribution, physical environment, social conditions, political and economic structure, religious beliefs and cult practices, technology and art of the African peoples. The material is to be presented as briefly and on as consistent a plan as possible, and the text will be supplemented by maps and comprehensive bibliographies.

The Ethnographic Survey is being published as a series of separate, self-contained studies, each devoted to one particular people or cluster of peoples. It is hoped that publication in this form will make the results more quickly and readily available to those interested in specific areas or groups. A list of the sections which have already appeared is given on the cover of this volume.

Since the unequal value and the generally unsystematic nature of the available information constituted a chief reason for undertaking this survey, it will be obvious that the material here presented can make no claim to be complete or definitive. Every effort has been made, however, to scrutinise all available literature and to check it by reference to unpublished sources and to workers actually in the field; thus it is intended to present a clear picture of our existing knowledge and to point out the directions in which the need for further studies is most pressing. Any assistance from those who are in a position to remedy deficiencies and correct inaccuracies by providing supplementary material will be greatly appreciated.

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The International African Institute expresses its thanks to the Colonial Social Science Research Council, for recommending the grant which has made possible the initiation of the work, and also to the many scholars, research workers, administrative officers and missionaries in Europe, South Africa and the various African territories who have so generously responded to our appeals for information and who have spared time to correct and add to the drafts.

Special thanks are due to Dr. Audrey Richards, who supervised and revised part I of this volume, and to Mr. Norreys Davis of the Northern Rhodesia Service who kindly supplied information to Father Stefaniszyn; also to Professor Max Gluckman for his supervision of the work on the Lozipale peoples in part II, and to the Director and Trustees of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, as well as to Mr. Ian Cunnison, one of their research officers, for their co-operation in allowing use to be made of unpublished material.

DARYLL FORDE,
Director, International African Institute

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THE BEMBA AND RELATED PEOPLES OF NORTHERN RHODESIA

INTRODUCTION

This section is concerned with a group of matrilineal peoples having linguistic and other cultural affinities, who belong to the wider group usually known as the Central Bantu,(1) and occupy the north-eastern plateau and the Bangweulu Swamps of Northern Rhodesia. They include:

(I) The BEMBA, BISA, AUSHI (with sub-groups NGUMBU, CHISHINGA, MUKULU, KAWENDI), UNGA, SHILA, TAMBA, BWILE, TWA.

(II) The LALA including the LUANO.

(III) The AMBO (or KAMBONSENGA).

(IV) The LAMBA, including the SEWA, LIMA and SWAKA.

(V) The KAONDE.

Notes are appended on:

(VI) The SENGA, a Tumbuka-ised offshoot of the Bisa.

I. The *BEMBA* occupy an area on the north-eastern plateau of some 20,000 square miles, between latitudes 9°-12°S. and longitudes 29°-32°E.; an area which includes virtually the whole of Kasama administrative district and much of Mpika, Chinsali, Luwingu and Mporokoso. To the west, south and east, in a corridor of varying width, stretches the territory of the Bisa. Further to the west and stretching into the Belgian Congo(2) are the Aushi and their sub-groups Ngumbu, Chishinga, Mukulu and Kawendi. The inhospitable swamps of the Lake Bangweulu are occupied by the Unga and the little-known Twa. To the north-west are the Shila, Bwile and Tabwa, also extending into the Belgian Congo. In the territory of the last are still to be found enclaves of Swahili-speaking groups, made up of Arabs, Yao, Nyanja and other groups who, coming originally into the area as slave traders, have settled down and intermarried with the local population. Some Tabwa (c.3,500 in 1937) and Bemba (c.30,000 in 1937) are living as minorities in the reserves demarcated by the Commission of 1927.

II. The *LALA* occupy an area between 12°-15°S. and 29.5°-32.5°E., covering the whole of the administrative district of Serenje, parts of Mkushi and Petauke districts and an area in the Haut-Katanga district of the Belgian Congo in the territory of Sakania. This last, also known as Bukanda district, is occupied by four Lala chieftaincies;(3) Munday describes it, as well as the Luano country to the south, as being occupied by similar, but distinct groups: Bena Bukanda and Bena Luano.(4) There is little other

(1) cf. I. Schapera, "A working classification of the Bantu Peoples", *Man*, May, 1939.
(2) See map for the extent of the Aushi, Bemba, Shila and Tabwa into the Belgian Congo.
(3) Lambo, 1946, No.8, p.233.
(4) Munday, 1, 1940, p.435; 5, 1948.

evidence for this distinction and the differences in social organisation are probably small. The *LUANO* inhabit the Mulungushi valley and the confluence of that river and the Lunsemfwa. Concerning the four chieftaincies cited by Lambo as being in the Petauke district, there is some difficulty. The district includes the lands of three groups: Ambo, Nsenga and Chikunda, who have often been grouped with the Tumbuka-speaking peoples to the north-east.(1) The Ambo, however, share a ruling clan with the Lamba and Lala, and are considered below. The Nsenga and the Chikunda are described among the Maravi peoples in the Lake Nyasa section of the survey.(2)

III. The *AMBO*. This offshoot of the Lala call themselves Mumbo (plural Bambo) or Kambonsenga. The term Ambo in use is the plural Nsenga form.(3) They are sometimes wrongly called the Luano. The Soli of Mpanshya country call the whole of the Lukusashi and Lunsemfwa valleys and their inhabitants the Luano. The western Lala probably do the same. The bulk of the Ambo are settled in the middle and lower valley of the Lukusashi and its tributaries. One group under Chief Mboshya occupy the country on the left bank of the Lunsemfwa between its tributaries the Tumbwe and the Tutenje, i.e. the country on both banks of the Chipawa which flows through the centre of Mboshya country. Tutenje stream divides the Kambonsenga (and Mboshya country) from the Luano. Another group of the Ambo reached the Luangwa. They occupy the country of Chief Mwape, east of the Luangwa between the Mtikila stream and the banks of lower Mwuvye river. They also occupy the western side of the Luangwa opposite the country of Mwanpe. The confluence of the Lukusashi-Lunsemfwa is inhabited by the Chiponda, a sub-tribe of the Nsenga. Thus the ethnical boundaries are sharply marked, the villages being fairly homogeneous in speech though the shifting of villages complicates the tribal boundaries. In many villages a few men of an alien tribe may be found married matrilocally and settled.(4)

IV. The *LAMBA* including the SEWA,(5) LIMA and SWAKA occupy an area extending across the whole of Ndola administrative district, parts of Solwezi, Mumbwa and Mkushi districts and including an area in Sakania 'Territory' in the Haut-Katanga district of the Belgian Congo. Within this area of some 25,000 sq. miles there are, in addition to Lamba, a number of sub-groups, all closely related and consisting in varying degree of mixtures with the neighbouring peoples. The Sewa in the north-west of the area seem to be a mixture of Lamba-Sewa-Kaonde groups; the Lima, in the south, have a Lenje element and the Swaka, in the east, have mingled considerably with both Lala and Lenje; in fact, a recent report(6) states that on the definition of the South Swaka reserve in 1929 many Swaka were moved thither from Broken Hill - generally considered to be Lenje country; a circumstance possibly due to pressure on the Swaka by the Lala, whose tendency to shift

(1) Tribal Map of East Africa, 1943, Sheet 2.
(2) See Tew, 1950, pp.30-1.
(3) In this survey the terms Ambo and Kambonsenga are used indiscriminately. It is not correct to speak of two different sub-tribes, the Ambo and the Kambonsenga. It may be noted, however, that the section living in Petauke district is officially termed Ambo and that in Mkushi, Kambonsenga.
(4) Stefaniszyn, 1950.
(5) The 'W' of Sewa, a bi-labial fricative, as the initial consonant in Bemba, is found as a 'B' in Guthrie's *Classification of the Bantu Languages*.
(6) Report of the Land Commission, 1946.

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southwards has been noted by Munday.(1) The Lamba occupy about one-fifth of this whole area.

Prior to 1926 there was little interference with tribal settlement or movement in the area. In that year, however, a commission was set up to determine native reserves - to be set away from but with access to the railway southward from Ndola and away from the immediate vicinity of the Copperbelt, both of which areas were deemed capable of development by Europeans. Four reserves were subsequently set up: (1) Lamba - Lima (redefined in 1942), (2) Swahili - Yao, (3) Soaka - North, (4) Soaka - South (redefined in 1943). The result of these changes on the population distribution is discussed below.

V. The *KAONDE*(2) are the most westerly group of the peoples under consideration, and occupy the greater part of the administrative districts known as Kasempa, Mumbwa and the old Solwezi district. It is not clear how far their territory extends into the Belgian Congo. Verhulpen's(3) tribal map of the Katanga province of the Belgian Congo marks the Kaonde as extending almost to 24° east to an average depth of 45 miles over the Northern Rhodesian border. Maes and Boone,(4) however, make no mention of any Kaonde groups in the Congo: there is an isolated reference to 'Kawonde' in Angola(5) but this is not substantiated by any other references. Moffat Thomson(6) mentions that there are Kaonde in the Congo.

VI. The *SENGA* occupy both banks of the upper reaches of the Luangwa river between about 10°30'S.-12°S., and parts of the administrative districts of Lundazi and Chinsali. There has been some confusion in the past of the Senga with the Nsenga people,(7) who are located to the south-east of the lower reaches of the Luangwa river and who formerly extended over to the west bank. It seems clear that the Nsenga are of Maravi stock, with Lenje-Lala accretions, who seceded from the Cewa about the middle of the last century.(8) In contrast, the Senga appear to be a Bisa offshoot with Tumbuka(9) accretions, who were driven into the valley under Bemba pressure. The difference is also to be seen in language. (See p.70 below.)

The *MAMBWE-LUNGU*, numbers of whom are found in the northern districts of North-eastern Rhodesia, have been grouped historically, culturally and linguistically(10) with the patrilineal Iwa and Wanga to the east of them, with whom they share affiliations to the Fipa peoples of South-west Tanganyika. Linguistically, while Doke(11) considers both to be dialects of Bemba, Guthrie(12) places Mambwe and Lungu with Fipa in a single group, with Iwa and Wanga in a second group of the same zone. The Mambwe-Lungu are not

(1) Munday, 1, 1940.
(2) Other variations, e.g. *Kahonde*, *Kawonde* are found in Belgian publications but the above is generally recognised as being correct.
(3) Verhulpen, 1936.
(4) Maes and Boone, 1935.
(5) Van Duggenhout and Wena, 1933.
(6) Moffat Thomson, 1934.
(7) viz, Cashead, 1914; Moffat Thomson, 1934; Trapnell, 1943.
(8) Livingstone, *The Zambezi and its Tributaries*, quoted by Poole, 1936; Tew, 1950, p.31.
(9) Poole, op.cit.
(10) See Moffat Thomson, 1934; Weinhard, 1947; Guthrie, 1948.
(11) 1945. (12) op.cit.

101 considered here but will be discussed in a forthcoming section concerned
131 with the peoples of the eastern shore of southern Lake Tanganyika and adjacent regions.

In brief, the Bemba-Lala-Lamba-Kaonde groups, with their closely related sub-groups, occupy almost the whole of North-eastern Rhodesia and the northern parts of North-western Rhodesia, besides adjacent areas of the Belgian Congo.

132 With the exception of the swamp-dwelling groups, the Unga and the Twa,
133 all live under broadly similar conditions. Plentiful rainfall waters the generally unproductive plateau soils covered by deciduous woodland. The
161 density of population which such land can carry is small, reaching only to about 12 persons per square mile, and this figure is not exceeded, or even approached, except in reserves where local over-population of a serious nature occurs, and in the swamp areas where inundation creates a land shortage either permanent or seasonal. The total population of the selected groups can be reckoned to be about 440,000.

GENERAL CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

197 The languages of these peoples are closely similar, so much so that the whole group of peoples in this area has been loosely termed "Bemba-speaking".(1) Guthrie, however, distinguishes within one of his linguistic zones *Bemba* with *Aushi* as a sub-dialect; *Tabwa* with *Shila* as a sub-dialect; and a further group of closely related languages, *Bisa, Lamba, Lala, Sweka,* and *Swa.*(2) He places *Kaonde* in a different linguistic zone, L, because it has certain distinct features, such as a single prefix in independent nominals, which make it more closely related to the Luba group of languages. No mention is made of the languages spoken by other small groups closely related to the Bemba, such as Chishinga, Mukulu, Ngumbu, Kawendi, and Bwile. What little is known about the languages spoken by the Unga and Twa suggests that they may be closely related to Bisa.

174 There is apparently little linguistic evidence to support the tradi-
173 tion held by all these peoples that they originated in areas west of the Luapula from peoples of Luba stock, although Richards says that Bemba told her that archaic words they used in ceremonies at their Paramount's court were "Ciluba".

105 These people practise shifting cultivation with finger millet as the staple crop in the east and cassava in the west. The absence of cattle in the area distinguishes them from the Mambwe to the north and some of the Ngoni to the east. The greater part of the area lies within the tsetse belt, but Lambo mentions that cattle were used as marriage payments among the Lala, and a few goats and sheep are kept by the Bemba and probably by other tribes. Hunting was highly developed in the west of the area before the arrival of Europeans and hunting guilds and associations are recorded.

(1) Richards, 6, 1939, p.16, and Moffat Thomson, 1934.
(2) Guthrie, 1948. A zone is both a geographical and a linguistic concept in that the languages within it have both linguistic affinities and geographical propinquity.

105

Marketing and organised trade were non-existent before the British occupation except in the Bangweulu swamps where fish and other commodities were continuously bartered. Arabs traded guns for slaves and ivory in the 19th century.

The material equipment of these peoples is of the simplest. Bark cloth was the only form of clothing before the appearance of Europeans, but it was not elaborately patterned or ornamented. Wood-carving can hardly be said to exist in the eastern part of the area and even in the west fails to reach anything like the artistic heights found amongst the peoples of the Congo. Iron was smelted and is still forged into spears or axe-heads with primitive bellows. Pottery made by the coil method is made everywhere but only the simplest designs are found. The common type of hut is the round wattle and daub house with a roof with over-hanging eaves and a verandah. Rectangular huts are more common in the west and are being introduced in the east in imitation of the European house.

All groups are matrilineal. Clans are totemic (in so far as they have totem names), exogamous and dispersed. A form of joking relationship, reciprocal burial rites between clans whose totem names are either complementary or antipathetic, and reciprocal hospitality in varying degrees are characteristic. Loosely organised matrilineages of some 3 to 4 generations' depth are found in most groups for which there is information but there is no evidence of larger corporate, segmented lineages.

Marriage is matrilocal, at the outset at least. The transfer of goods, so significant a feature of the marriage contract in other areas, has here only a token character. The important element in the contract here is the service undertaken by the husband for the parents-in-law over a period of years.

Formal age sets or regiments as found in East Africa do not occur and secret societies as found in the Congo occurred only in the swamp area and are now either extinct or vestigial.

The village, generally of some 30-50 huts, is the basic political unit and is administered by a headman to whom the majority of villagers are related. It tends, however, to be an impermanent unit, consequent especially on features of the system of shifting cultivation.

The political structure of the wider groups varies considerably. The Bemba have a centralized form of government, a single paramount chief with secular and ritual functions, a royal dynasty and chiefs with fixed titles. The Lala and Kaonde, in contrast, were, at the time of contact with Europeans, composed of small autonomous chiefdoms, owing no allegiance to an external authority and without any centralized form of government.

Ancestor worship is the core of religious observance in the area. While all groups recognise a high-god, *Lesa*, with one exception(1) he is not worshipped.

(1) See pp.28-9 below.

105 Girls' initiation (*cisungu*) is general but with varying elaboration of ritual and social significance. In some groups it is a nubility, in others a puberty rite, or both. Among the Kaonde it antedates puberty by a couple of years but is subsequent to marriage.

The unevenness of the treatment in this account is largely a reflection of the limitations of the available material. The detail provided by the Ecological Survey has made it possible to give a fuller picture of the agriculture of the area, but material on social organisation is very scanty for some groups. The Bemba, who are singularly well documented, are given fuller treatment than would be justified were the documentation on the other groups more complete.

At the present time the area has the character of a labour reserve and there is a high annual migration rate of adult males to the belt of copper-mines that runs from Broken Hill to Elisabethville.

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I. THE BEMBA AND RELATED PEOPLES

TRIBAL AND SUB-TRIBAL GROUPINGS AND DEMOGRAPHY

NOMENCLATURE

The Bemba and Bisa were formerly known as the Wemba and Wisa on account of the fact that the initial consonant is a bi-labial fricative the sound of which is midway between a European W and a B. In the new orthography B is used to represent this sound. The Aushi (also called Batushi, Ba-usi, Wa-uzhi, Wa-usi) were formerly known as Ushi but the nomenclature here adopted is now generally accepted. 101

The Unga are described in Belgian publications as Honja, while Kawendi are also sometimes described as Bena and Kabende.

POPULATION AND DISTRIBUTION

The Bemba are the largest tribe in Northern Rhodesia; their numbers in 1933 being given as 114,274,(1) although a later figure suggests that 140,000(2) is more accurate. The 1933 figures for the other groups are as follows:- 161 162

Bisa	41,591	Ngumbu	24,116
Aushi	28,958 *	Chishinga	22,604
Unga	13,670	Tabwa	7,918 *
Kawendi	9,189	Shila	5,536 *
Mukulu	10,522	Bwile	4,745
		Twa	1,480

(* Excluding groups living in the Belgian Congo)

The density of population is difficult to estimate on account of wide local variations; an impression may be gained from the following estimates for administrative districts:-

	Persons per square mile	
	1938(3)	1949(4)
(Chiengi	4.05)	Not listed as a district in subsequent publications
Mporokoso	4.05	4.6
Abercorn	6.2	6.9
Isoka	3.54	4.6
Kasama	6.67	8.0
Luwingu	7.86	9.2
Fort Rosebery	7.79	8.0
Chinsali	3.46	3.7
Mpika	1.86	2.3

(1) Moffat Thomson, 1934.
(2) Richards, 6, 1939.
(3) Pim, 1938.
(4) Appendix F. *Report of the Financial Relationship Committee*, Lusaka 1949. The source of these figures is not, however, stated.

161 These figures are likely to be inaccurate for the reserves, although the 1938 Commission reported no serious overpopulation; they certainly give an entirely misleading picture with regard to the swamp area for which Trapnell(1) notes local densities of approximately 150 and 340 persons per square mile, and a later work estimates density as high as 400 per square mile in one area and over 200 per square mile in another.(2) Labour migration affects these figures but this subject is dealt with later.

HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN

175 It is probable that, with the possible exception of the Twa, all the groups in the area came to their present habitat from west of the Luapula River in the Congo, and that they are offshoots of the great Luba tribe. There are detailed studies of the traditions of only the Bemba, Aushi and Unga, with scattered comments on the Twa.

The *Bemba*, in their incursion into their present habitat seem to have been preceded by the Bisa and followed by the Lunda, whom Lacerda visited in 1798 and whom Coxhead believes to have arrived c. 1740.(3) On their arrival the Bemba began to expand rapidly, pushing back both the Bisa and Lala to the south(4) and the Lungu and Mambwe peoples in the north. Livingstone passed through Bemba country early in 1867, coming in contact with them for the first time in the country north-east of Lake Bangweulu. He comments on the war-like nature of these peoples whose villages were walled and surrounded with a dry moat.(5)

At the time of the establishment of the British South Africa Company in 1899 at Kasama, the Bemba Paramount Chief held sway over the whole of the area between Lakes Mweru, Bangweulu, Nyasa and Tanganyika, and southwards into the present Lala and Lamba country. There is still a small group of Bemba near Tabora in Tanganyika.

There is little to indicate how the Bemba fought, or the nature of their military organisation. Their campaigns seem to have been essentially raids, operations with groups of mobile, well-armed, determined warriors but not on the scale of those of the highly organised Ngoni with whom they had contacts in the east. There was certainly a flourishing trade with Arab slave traders for guns and ammunition, which contributed in no small way to the success of their campaigns.(6)

The *Aushi*, probably an offshoot of the Lunda people of the Congo prior to their migration eastward, arrived in the area shortly after the Lunda chief, Kazembe, assumed power in the area south of Lake Mweru, c. 1750.(7) Their traditions are closely bound up with their tribal god, *Makumba*, a symbol of the authority of the Aushi Paramount Chief. At the time of their

(1) Trapnell, 1943, p.71.
(2) Brelsford, S, 1946.
(3) Coxhead, 1914.
(4) See Lala - p.33 below for different version.
(5) Waller, 1874.
(6) Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1904. Cf. "Life of Bwembya" by A.I. Richards in *Ten Africans*, edited by M. Perham, 1936.
(7) Philpot, 1936.

separation from the Lunda, the Aushi were led by one Muwe, a commoner, who 'discovered' *Makumba* and whose son Chabala became the first Paramount Chief. This Chabala was subsequently killed in a disastrous war with Kazembe's Lunda but was avenged by *Makumba* who forthwith despatched a famine to the victors who had to sue for forgiveness. *Makumba* subsequently saved the Aushi again in an equally unsuccessful resistance against the Ba-Yeke.(1) The later history of the group in the closing years of the last century and the first thirty of this was occupied with a series of disputes over the paramountcy. While previously the Paramount held both secular and spiritual power - as guardian of *Makumba* - this period witnessed the split of the paramountcy into two, a secular and a spiritual chief. This division of function lasted until 1933.

The *Unga* are thought to be of Luba origin, and to have migrated with the Bemba and other groups in the 18th century from the west, subsequently splitting off from them with the Mukulu and Ngumbu, who later came under Aushi authority.(2) With the Chishinga and Kwendi they form a closely related block. In fact the Unga trace their ultimate descent from an ancestress, Kaundamwelwa, from whose daughters the Ngumbu, Mukulu, Chishinga and Unga trace their more immediate ancestry.(3) Their later history is one of inter-tribal quarrels and of occasional raids by the Bemba when the water-level in the swamps fell low enough to permit land-travel.

The *Twa*, one of a number of swamp-dwelling peoples of that name,(4) seem to have been well established in the area at the time when the Unga arrived.(5) Von Rosen, who spent some time in the area with a Swedish ethnological expedition, considers that they, along with the other groups in the area, originally came from the Congo and were of Luba stock.(6) They were at enmity with the Unga until very recently - 1943 - and as early as 1916 were made to settle at Kansenga outside Unga territory, but throughout the years of contact have intermarried freely with the Unga.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The soils of the area are generally poor, of a thin sandy character, and are covered by deciduous woodland, predominantly of the type *Brachystegia-Isoberlinia*. In the Lake Basin, however, a high grass woodland (*chipya*) predominates, in which very tall grass grows mixed in with various types of tree. Largely deciduous, this type of woodland is remarkable for dense evergreen thickets.

The climate is characterised by a single rainy season in which generally more than adequate rainfall is assured. On the Central Plateau an average of 45 inches per year is customary, decreasing in the east and north-west and rising in the Lake Basin area.

The annual mean variation of temperature on the Central Plateau appears to be 55°-84°F.

(1) Maes and Boone, 1935. see Ba-Yeke.
(2) See Philpot, 1936.
(3) Brelsford, 5, 1946.
(4) Anon., N.A.D.A. 1948.
(5) Brelsford, op.cit.
(6) Von Rosen, 1914.

MAIN FEATURES OF THE ECONOMY AND MATERIAL CULTURE

AGRICULTURE

241 Three main crops are grown in the area but only one of these, finger millet, is a universal staple: it is well suited to a highland climate and to rainy summers. Of the other two, Kaffir corn (*Sorghum Vulgare*) seems to be of decreasing importance, though it is still the crop of chief ritual significance. It requires a good soil and more labour, particularly in the protection of the crop from the ravages of birds. The remaining crop, cassava, seems to have been introduced into the area from the Congo and its use is still spreading eastwards. It is a staple in some areas, particularly in the Lake area. It makes a lighter but less sustaining flour than millet and is poorer in fats - which are deficient generally in the diet. Maize is grown as a subsidiary crop. Besides these, groundnuts, beans, edible gourds, pumpkins, cucumbers and cowpeas are planted.

241 184 The method of cultivation common in the area is known as the *citemene* system. The word comes from *ukutema* "to cut". It describes the common practice in this part of North-eastern Rhodesia of pollarding trees and piling the lopped branches in small circular patches which are then fired to form an ash bed in which the seeds are sown. This practice, also known as "slash and burn", is commonly held to be typical of, and to have originated with, the Bemba, but there is some evidence that it was borrowed from the tribes they found in the area; it is, in fact, almost identical with that found among the Lungu and some Mambwe-speaking groups. The Bemba themselves say that in Luba-land they were formerly hoe-cultivators and learnt the *citemene* practice from the peoples with whom they made contact on their arrival. The system differs from that practised further south among the Lamba-Lala groups, where almost no rotation of crops is carried out and the area cleared, besides being larger, is made into a number of small garden-patches. Trapnell distinguishes the Bemba practice as the Northern *citemene* system and that of the Lamba-Lala group as the Southern *citemene*.

This 'Northern' method involves the preparation, for the sowing of finger millet, of a single circular garden from a clearing in the woodlands. The proportion of pollarding required to provide the ash for a garden is estimated, for the more thickly wooded country, to be about 6½ times the size of garden required and about 10 times the size of that needed in the poorer woodlands.

Land selection is largely dictated by the growth of trees as a source of branches for burning for millet-gardens. There is a certain preference for old forest land. The cutting is carried out around May. The Bemba are noted for their custom of climbing recklessly to the top of the trees and lopping off the branches. Smaller trees tend to be cut off waist high, a practice widely carried out by the Bisa and Lala as well as by the Mambwe and Lungu.

The fallen branches are systematically stacked with the thicker ends toward the centre and the piles are fired together, traditionally by a signal that the chief's garden has been lit. This takes place some time between the end of September and the middle of November. The area is now

covered by a blanket of fine ash and is called *bukula*, a garden. Subsequently this garden is fenced and the cleared ground beyond the fence remains uncultivated. While, apart from the wood ash, the Bemba do not deliberately use manure or decaying organic matter for its restorative powers as do the Manbwe, they do recognize that gardens on old village sites tend to be more fertile. The ash covering on the garden does a good deal to counteract the acid in the soil and makes further weeding unnecessary. While this system of clearing annually large areas of bush has frequently been condemned as wasteful, no more satisfactory method of woodland cultivation has yet been evolved.

Millet is sown when the ground is soft after the first rains. Kaffir corn and cassava are sometimes sown immediately before the millet. In succeeding years other crops will be grown in an old millet-garden but a new millet-garden is made annually.

The elaborate nature of the system lies in the extent to which rotation, or at any rate the alternation of crops in a four to seven years' cycle, has been developed. Throughout the central and north-western districts a simple rotation of millet-groundnuts-beans is practised, but in the Kasama district a more elaborate system is found - possibly owing to contact with Iwa and Inamwanga groups to the north where such rotations are even more developed. Here the millet-groundnut sequence is followed by either beans on mounds and kaffir corn or Kaffir corn on mounds and beans.(1) 241 242

Variations on the *citemene* system are found, corresponding with local variations in physical conditions, and a few are considered below: 241 184

1. *Aushi, Chishinga, Mukulu, Ngumbu, Kawendi*

On the plateau between Fort Rosebery and Kawambwa, occupied by Aushi, Chishinga and adjoining sections of Mukulu and Ngumbu, a form of *citemene* cultivation is found with cassava as a joint staple or staple crop. This seems to be a hybrid system representing a fusion between the millet-culture and a more recent cassava-culture from the Congo. Since millet is here grown chiefly for beer, cassava is the real staple, forming an important crop in the *citemene* and a main crop in the village gardens. Groundnuts play an important part in both gardens, and annual Kaffir corn is also found. Beans are less common and are not found among the southern Aushi.

Among the first four groups listed above, clearing of gardens may be done by lopping, favoured by the Aushi, or breast high cutting, favoured by the Chishinga. Millet is followed by mounded groundnuts, around which beans are planted among the Chishinga and Kaffir corn among the Aushi. Maize, gourds and pumpkins are planted as catch crops. Gardens may be abandoned after the second year, but Aushi, Ngumbu and Chishinga tend to mound beans in the third or fourth year. Village gardens are found throughout the area and here cassava is the main crop and groundnuts grown on mounds are more common than beans. Separate Kaffir corn gardens are found in the south among the Kawendi and Aushi.

(1) Richards quotes a ten-year sequence of crops in Bemba country near Kasama. 6, 1939, p.318.

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The Mukulu on the northern lake shore plant groundnuts in *citemene* gardens in the second year, as do the Bemba, and the Ngumbo and Kawendi in the Lake Basin grow millet in such *chipya* thickets as survive, alternating with cassava. Where thickets no longer exist, as on Chishi Island, the ground is broken by cassava mounds and then millet is planted. Some maize, gourds, cucumbers and pineapples are found near villages. Along the Luapula among the Chishinga a more prosperous form of agriculture is found, in which groundnuts predominate with cassava and millet is relatively unimportant.

2. *Bisa*

Among the Bisa to the north-east of the Lake, the *citemene* garden is planted with cassava either alone or as a joint staple with millet. Gardens are cleared by lopping, commonly every third year or less, and catch crops - gourds, pumpkins, maize - are planted with the cassava. Groundnuts are planted on the flat in the second year. Early millet gardens are not found. Rice is cultivated and the gardens prepared by the *citemene* method, the rice being broadcast as though it were millet. Village gardens, for the cultivation of root crops and pulses, are found throughout the area. Among Bisa living on islands in Lake Bangweulu, thicket cultivation is practised by burning the thicket *in situ* and sowing millet which is followed by cassava on mounds. Gourds, pumpkins and maize are also planted.

3. *Shila, Bwile, Tabwa*

In the southern parts of the area occupied by these groups, clearings are made by cutting trees at breast height and the gardens are sown with millet and catch crops. Subsequently the ground may be used for mounded groundnuts or millet and groundnuts or millet alone. In the Luapula basin and Lake Mweru area, millet is little cultivated and is restricted to small *citemene* clearings. The main gardens are planted with cassava and groundnuts. Kaffir corn is locally grown by the Bwile and among these people and the Shila rice is cultivated with the hoe. Very variable types of crops are found in the village gardens.

It is noteworthy that among the groups living in this latter area the value of rotted grass as manure is clearly recognised.

The dense thicket country north-east of Lake Mweru supports a distinct system, practised by the Tabwa. Finger millet is the staple crop and is sown in burnt gardens but the circular clearing, catch crops and crop sequence are absent. The clearing is roughly rectangular, the brushwood is burnt *in situ* and the main crop is grown for several consecutive years. With such limited variety in the crops cultivated, the village gardens play an important part in supplying root crops. Cassava is grown on separate parts of the garden. Rice is grown locally.

4. *Lunga*

The Lunga may be divided agriculturally into two groups: those living in the central raised swamp land of the Lunga plain and those living at the more southern end of the swamp on sandbanks and ant-hills.

The former make millet gardens on such land as is clear of water and subsequently plant stumped cassava. Such a two-year sequence may be continued for several years, but many groups abandon cultivation after the first two years. Village gardens are also planted with cassava, and bananas and pineapples are grown. In such gardens, made on low sandbanks denuded of soil by years of cultivation, cassava seldom grows to full maturity owing to the hunger of the cultivators. Some people make an annual migration to the Lunga plain to plant millet, others barter fish for meal. Very little in the way of subsidiary crops is found beyond a little kaffir corn, some beans and sweet potatoes. In the territory of Chief Kasoma[1] the people make a mass migration to cultivable areas in the dry season, June to November.

The Iva cultivate little, relying mainly on their fishing with which they get meal by trading. A certain amount of cassava cultivation is found here and there.

HUNTING AND FISHING

While every Bemba is a hunter by inclination, present shortage of game prevents this desire from being fully gratified. While Melland[2] records the existence of organized hunters' guilds and specialized hunters among the Kaonde these do not at present exist among the Bemba, although elephant hunters formerly were specialists. Hunting by traps and pits is neither an organized nor a specialized activity. Net hunting demands communal effort and is often carried out as a form of divination. There is little information on the hunting activities of the other groups; among the swamp peoples (Unga, Iva, Bisa) hunting is subordinated to fishing but the meat of a certain antelope (*lechwe*) was greatly in demand and these animals were hunted so persistently that a protection law has only prevented, recently, their extinction. There was a certain amount of trade in *lechwe* skins worked in designs.

Fishing is not a major activity, though fish is greatly appreciated as a relish and caught whenever possible. There is no regular trade in fish, nor is fishing a whole-time occupation except for certain groups living on the banks of the larger rivers, where there are definite fishing villages with permanent sites where fishing is carried on all the year round, and there is quite a complex system of pond and weir ownership.

Fish are caught by three chief methods: by poisoning, by weirs and by nets. Poisoning is a communal and unskilled activity carried out at the end of the dry season (August-November). Weirs are only in use in November and December before the crocodiles become a menace. Only one type of net is used, a rectangular variety, stretched across the river, at the beginning and end of the dry season.

It is among the swamp peoples, however - the Unga, Iva and, to a lesser extent, the Bisa - that fishing attains greatest importance. Here the land resources are so depleted, by the over-cultivation of areas which are diminishing in size through increasing inundation, that the growing population

(1) Brelsford, S, 1946. (2) Melland, 1923.

226 439 must fish or starve. Fish, however, is not only regarded as food, but is also used as an article of trade. The supply in Lake Bangweulu seems to be virtually inexhaustible. The Unga can sell their fish for meal at a good price on the Copperbelt and elsewhere and are therefore unwilling to leave this otherwise undesirable habitat.

226 A number of methods of fishing are employed, such as netting, the setting of lines, trapping fish in baskets set in weirs, catching fish in baskets at low water, and poisoning. The diversity of fishing methods is not as great as it is for instance among the Lozi further south,(1) but since the Unga are able to catch plenty of fish with their traditional technique, improvements of method seem unlikely.

226 423 Netting grounds are available to all, but weirs have a fixed ownership. In certain circumstances a chief may reallocate a weir, but generally the owner has the absolute right of use. He calls in friends and relatives to fish and to repair the weir and each keeps the fish caught in his own basket.

439 Fish may either be sold at the waterside or taken to Kapalala - the ferry over the Luapula at the Congo border - or to the markets on the Copperbelt. A better price is obtainable at the latter but against that has to be set the time involved and expense incurred (such as the purchase of a bicycle or the canoe to Kapalala, and thence by lorry to Ndola). Of those selling at the waterside, some sell to African consumers, some to middlemen, some to Missions and some to representatives of European firms. Many fishermen, however, find their way to Mufulira market on the Copperbelt to market their own fish.(2)

The following figures taken by Brelsford in 1943 from some 250 Unga fishermen show the distribution of their choice:-(3)

64% sold their fish either in Kapalala or Ndola.
12% sold on the mainland at places like Fort Rosebery.
24% sold at the waterside.

CRAFTS

412 [411] Bemba equipment is of the simplest kind. There are only four main implements: an axe-blade, locally forged and fixed into a wooden haft,(4) used for clearing the bush and most other wood-cutting jobs; iron hoe blades, also fixed into wooden hafts, were formerly traded from the Lungu; a spear, locally forged, used in war, hunting and fishing; and, finally the bow, now rarely made. These tools are of the simplest kind, neither carved nor decorated and, generally speaking, crafts are poorly developed. Decorative iron-work, which reached a high level of development among the Luba peoples, hardly exists. Iron-smelting is still practised among the Aushi(5) and was recently revived among the Chishinga(6) group, formerly

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(1) Gluckman, 1941. (2) Brelsford, f. 1947.
(3) Brelsford, 5, 1946, gives a more detailed treatment on the subject.
(4) Mass produced European tools are now superseding the others.
(5) Barnes, 1926.
(6) Brelsford, 7, 1949.

4:Whiteley E-4 (no date) 1950 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

widely reputed for their iron-working, when during the recent war tools became scarce. It is rarely found among the Bemba. Village smiths able to reforge and sharpen axe-blades and hoes are, however, common all over the area. The Unga obtained iron blades for their fish-spears from the Bakulu. 325

Wood-carving, highly developed among the Congo peoples, is limited among the Bemba to the simplest geometric designs, but Von Rosen noted some elaborate and rather striking carving among the Twa.(1) Weaving is unknown among the Bemba, and is not reported elsewhere. Baskets are generally made well but are not elaborate. For a fishing group the Unga have little variety in baskets and these again are simply made. A certain amount of leather-work is made by the Bemba. Both cooking and eating pots are made all over the plateau, but although they are well made they tend to be badly fired and hence to be fragile. 322 286 285 281 553

Salt-making flourishes particularly among the Shila and Tabwa, around Lake Mweru.(2) It is highly lucrative, compensates for the comparative infertility of the soil and provides a lively marketing activity. The salt is obtained by straining the soil through baskets and boiling the resultant brine. The salt-earth supply in the area is permanent and this tends to have a stabilizing effect upon villages, which would otherwise move frequently in accordance with the practice of shifting cultivation. The natural salt found in the pans at Mpika in Bemba country was also utilized and highly valued, being traded around the country to gratify the longing for salt in which the Bemba diet is singularly lacking. 317

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

KINSHIP

(a) *Matrilineal Descent* is one of the cultural characteristics of this area. Amongst all these people affiliation is traced through the mother and a man belongs to his mother's clan. Succession is within a loosely organised matrilineage of narrow span whereby a man is succeeded by his younger brothers or by his sisters' sons, or by his sisters' daughters' sons. These rules govern succession to chieftainship, to a headmanship, or to the name and status of a dead man by the practice known in this area as *ukupyanika*.(3) A woman usually succeeds to the name of her maternal grandmother and, in the case of a chieftainess, she succeeds to the title itself. Succession to a name is associated with the power to call on the ancestral spirits of the dead man or woman in question. 611

All the peoples described appear to be organized into matrilineal clans with totemic names. Among the Bemba, for instance, there are 40 or more such dispersed exogamous matrilineal clans. The clan claims descent from an original ancestress, a more or less legendary figure dating from the time of the first occupation of their present territory by the Bemba. Clan centres, in the sense of original villages of occupation, are remembered but 614

(1) Von Rosen, 1914. (2) Moore, 1937.
(3) Richards, 9, 1950, describes this as 'positional succession'.

614 it must be emphasized that the matriclans in this area are in no sense political or territorial groups. Through clan affiliation a man traces his descent, his rank, and, if he belongs to the royal clan, his right to succeed to chieftainship. In the old days substitution of men or women in the payment of blood revenge could take place within the clan. But no property is owned in common by the clan. There is neither joint occupation of land nor collective ritual activities. The distinguishing features of the Bemba clan are the name, praise-name and legends associated with the original ancestress and also, in some cases, with her brother.

554 614 616 Characteristic aspects of these Bemba clans are the hierarchy of status in which they are ranged and the reciprocity of paired clan relations. The former is based on the alleged priority of the arrival of clan ancestors in Bemba country and also proximity to the heart of the country. Highest in rank and forming the royal clan are the Crocodiles. This hierarchy is to be observed in other groups in the area, though the royal clans differ. Clan names, generally those of natural objects, animals, birds etc., have been called totemic, although there are few, if any, food taboos associated with them.(1) The words used are frequently archaic and are common to other groups in the area, e.g. Lamba, Kaonde, Lala. The story of their acquisition is the basis for the pairing of opposite clans. The clans paired seem to be those whose clan symbols are naturally antipathetic or complementary to one another, e.g., fish and crocodile, mushroom and rain. They are not paired systematically but often by purely arbitrary factors connecting the clan with several such partners.

616 764 582 602 Reciprocal functions of a paired clan are chiefly confined to funeral rites.(2) The *'banungwe'*, the name used reciprocally by members of paired clans, of a dead man's family both help and hinder at the burial ceremony. Ritually expressed, therefore, the traditional attitude between partners is one of hostility yet, as the complementary nature of the clan names often implies, one of service. Between partners there is ease and freedom of behaviour, privileges are taken and formerly, it is said, marriages between them were preferential. Briefly, reciprocal clan relationship among the Bemba implies ritual interdependence, partnership of rivals expressed in ritual, traditional joking and licence in daily relations and preferential marriage claims.(3)

613 [591] Within the Bemba clan a loosely organized group called "the house" (*inganda*) is recognised which is composed of the descendants of one woman. Richards points out that this matrilineage is in no sense a corporate group.(4) The members of the "house" trace descent to one woman and remember the village where this woman lived. They do not, however, live in one place since the rules of residence at marriage necessitate the scattering of both male and female members of the matrilineage throughout a number of villages. No property is owned in common by its members, nor is its senior male in a position of political authority, although he has certain powers over the women of the group and their children. This dispersed

(1) Richards, 6, 1939, p.62. Food taboos do exist among the Tabwa, see Vleugels J. 1948. (2) Richards, 5, 1937.
(3) This is marked among the Tabwa. See Vleugels, op.cit.
(4) Richards, 9, 1950.

matrilineage is, in the case of commoners, merely a unit of succession; in the case of members of the royal dynasty it is the unit which provides for the succession of chieftainships. 613

MARRIAGE

Uxorilocal residence, at any rate during the early years of married life, is characteristic of this group of peoples. Large payments in money or goods are not made at marriage, but the bridegroom, formerly at least, gave service to his parents-in-law for a number of years and sometimes remains permanently a member of the village in which his wife was born. Among the Bemba, for instance, it is the common practice for a young man to give a small betrothal present (*nsalamo*) to his fiancée's parents. He then moves to her village and builds a house there. Young girls were often engaged in this way before puberty, and performed small services for their husbands, such as sweeping the hut, drawing water or even sleeping in the same bed with them. At puberty they were removed from their husbands' huts until the *cisungu* (girls' puberty rite) had been performed and a marriage ceremony with the ritual consummation of the union took place. When she was first married, a girl had no right to a fire-place of her own, but shared in the cooking with her mother and married sisters. Later she acquired her own fire-place, granary and garden. After two or more children had been born, and the son-in-law had won the confidence of his parents-in-law, he was allowed to remove his bride to his own village or to some other village of his choosing. The rate of conversion of such marriages is not known amongst the Bemba, although Richards states that she believes that it was higher in this area than among the Bisa.(1) Figures for the Bemba, who practice a similar type of marriage, are given on p.59. 591 583 [88] [85]

Characteristic of the Bemba marriage contract is the importance attached to the series of ceremonial presentations of food by the mother-in-law to her son-in-law, which gradually make him "free" to eat the different staple foods, and the final ceremony known as *the kuingishya* or "*the entering in* of the son-in-law", which takes place after the children have been born and the marriage is established and which puts an end finally to the tabooed relationship between a man and his wife's people. The ceremonial marking of the different stages in the establishment of a permanent marriage relationship was sometimes concluded in the old days by a second marriage ceremony known as the *kuinga*. This was a gesture of respect which a man of substance offered to his wife and her people in the case of a marriage which had been long established with a woman to whom the husband was particularly devoted. At the *kuinga* marriage, which has also been described for the Bisa, more goods were transferred than in the case of the first marriage, and it is specifically stated to have been a display of wealth.(2) 583

Among the Lunya, marriage procedures seem to be much more casual, there being no service by the son-in-law. Brelsford suggests that the marriage payment serves simply to confirm the fact that intercourse between the couple has already started and that the marriage is a fact.(3) The Bemba hold such arrangements in contempt. 583 184

(1) Richards, A, 1950.
(2) Richards, A, 1940.
(3) Brelsford, L, 1946, p.108.

595 Polygynous marriages occur throughout this area and the second marriage of a man is usually virilocal instead of uxorilocal. Save for chiefs, however, the polygynous household is not a recognised social unit as it is amongst the patrilineal southern and eastern Bantu. Where commoners marry two or more women, the second or third wife often lives in a different part of the village. Among chiefs, however, the wives live in huts fenced [622] round by a common stockade. Nowadays polygyny is not generally practised by commoners, though chiefs may have as many as several dozen wives. A sample of 209 Bemba marriages in the Chinsali district in 1939 showed 68% to be monogamously married, while an earlier sample showed 59%.(1) Similar figures are not available for the other tribes in the area.

582 Marriage within the Bemba clan is not permitted and Bemba themselves say they are prohibited also from marrying within their father's clan. This is not strictly true, since the preferential marriages of the Bemba include cross-cousins on both the father's and the mother's side. A further preferential marriage is that between a man and the classificatory granddaughter. From 144 marriages in 6 villages, 69% were between cross-cousins and a further 7% with grand-daughters.(2) A chief, but not a commoner, may marry the daughter of a son. A woman has rights over her brother's daughter, whom she may demand as an additional wife for her husband, or as a substitute, should she herself be tired of her partner and wish to return to live with her brother.

Inter-tribal marriages appear to be common today but formerly marriage was not allowed between members of tribes which believed that they shared a common origin. Gouldsbury, for instance, states that marriage was forbidden between the Bemba and the Northern Alungu, Senga and Aushi, but was permitted with the Southern Alungu, Tabwa, Lunda, Lamba, Bisa and Chishinga.

Divorce

584 Divorce was and is common amongst the Bemba, particularly in the early years of married life when the union is considered in some respects to be on trial. Where divorce occurs the children belong to the mother and her matrilineage, and no return is made for the service of the son-in-law or his token presents. Unga divorce rates, resulting from the absence of husbands from home, are extremely low according to Brelsford.(3) Formerly divorce seems to have been a family affair among the Unga, action being taken by the family of the injured party. Data for other tribes in this group are not available. Throughout this area main grounds for divorce appear to be the following: sterility, adultery, failure to perform domestic duties, or desertion on the part of the woman; impotence, ill-treatment and prolonged desertion on the part of the man.

FAMILY AND FAMILY EXTENSION

596 Among the Bemba the basic domestic unit is not usually the individual household composed of a man, his wife and young children, but a group of related households consisting of a middle-aged or old man and his wife, their married daughters and the latters' husbands and children. A young Bemba

(1) Richards, A. 1940, Table A. (2) Richards, A. 1940.
(3) Brelsford, J. 1949, p.103.

596 girl has no fire-place of her own when she marries, and remains a member of her mother's cooking-group, even as a young married woman. This extended family group is not a joint household in the sense of a compound surrounded by a wall, or a homestead or kraal seperated from other houses by some form of hedge, but a group of households which cooperate even though the huts in which they live may be scattered through the village. When a married man 593 with children wins the right to remove his family to his own village, it is a unit of this kind which usually moves with him. Richards describes the delight of a Bemba man in the birth of daughters who will attract sons to 604 the village and build up a group of this kind. In fact, although a woman's 611 children belong to her clan and must submit ultimately to the authority of her brother, who could, in the old days, sell them into slavery, the father nevertheless acquires considerable authority over his wife and children in a stable marriage. When the children are small they obey him; when the daughters marry they stay at first under his rule; and even the sons who go elsewhere to marry, remember their father, give him presents and may even join him later in preference to living with their mother's brother. Children also take their father's name, although they belong to their mother's clan, and some "sons of the chief" are given minor chieftainships as well as the royal princes - the sisters' sons of the chief. Richards emphasizes the extent to which authority is divided between the father and the mother's brother in this area, with a tendency for the power of the father to increase under modern conditions.(1)

604 Richards states that the avunculate is stronger at the present day among the Bisa. It is not quite clear whether this is a structural difference or due to the fact that the Bisa are, on the whole, less in contact with European civilisation. Little is known of this aspect of kinship among the Aushi and Unga. There seems, however, to be a marked contrast between the position of the father and mother's brother among the Bemba and among the Cewa and Yao to the east, where the avunculate is again much more strongly developed and there seems to be some form of corporate matrilineage.(2)

596 It will be seen that as regards residence and common activities the effective kinship unit is not one based on unilineal descent, as is common among the patrilineal, patrilocal Bantu, but a loosely organised group of kinsfolk composed of near relatives on both sides of the family. The Bemba call this group a *lupwa*.

KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

601 The bilateral character of Bemba kinship ties is reflected in the system of nomenclature. It will be found that in one's own generation, where there is the maximum distinction in terminology, a man uses the term *mutyinawe* for his own brothers and for parallel cousins, male and female, on his father's and his mother's side. Only his own sister is called by a special term, *nkashi*. A woman in the same way uses the sibling term for her own sister and for her parallel cousins, male and female, but uses a special term, *ndume*, for her own brother. No marriage is possible between a man and any woman who is a *mutyina* on the maternal or paternal side. A special term *mfyale* is used by men and women for their cross-cousins, i.e. either for the father's

(1) Richards, 1, 1934 and 9, 1950. (2) Tew, 1950, pp.11, 43.

sister's child or the mother's brother's child. Cross-cousin marriage is, as has been said, the preferential marriage, and joking relationships exist between a man and his female cross-cousins on either side.

In the first ascending generation, a man uses the term *tata* for his own father, his father's brothers, real and classificatory, and the husband of a woman whom he calls mother. He uses the term *mayo* for his own mother and her sisters, real or classificatory. He distinguishes his father's sister by a special term, *mayo senge*, from his mother's sisters and the mother's brother by a separate term, *yoma*, from his father's brother. In the first descending generation, there is a common term, *mwana*, used for both sexes, but a man calls the children of his sister by a special term, *mwipwa*, and a woman calls the children of her brother either *mwipwa* or *mwana senge*.

In the second ascending generation there is a common term, *shikulu*, for the paternal and maternal grandfathers, real or classificatory, and *nasa* for grandmother. In the second descending generation the same term, *nasshikulu*, is used for boys and girls, whether the children of daughters or the children of sons. The common term, *bukwe*, is used for spouses and members of the *lupwa*, although there is a special term for sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, *shifyala* or *nafyala*. These terms are used reciprocally.

CHANGES IN MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY DUE TO EUROPEAN INFLUENCE

Changes in marriage and the family have resulted both from the teaching of Christian missions and also because of the absences of adult males, who leave home to earn the means wherewith to pay tax and buy European goods. Missionary teaching has, as in other areas, been directed against the practice of polygyny and divorce. Missionaries have also opposed the practice of giving young girls to their husbands before puberty. They have endeavoured also to eradicate the magical attitudes towards sex and fire, described in a later section - attitudes which form one of the sanctions of marriage morality. They have been largely successful in their attempt to prevent the celebration of girls' initiation ceremonies (*cisungu*).

Native marriage is recognised in this area. The British South Africa Company recognised the Native Customary Law from the start and administered it through district magistrates' courts with the aid of Bemba assessors. Simultaneously the missions instituted various Christian ceremonials in which a restricted(1) form of traditional marriage ceremony was carried out. With the institution in 1929 of Native Courts of Law, all civil actions arising out of marriage were referable to them and not to a European Magistrate. An early missionary claim to regulate marriages was quashed in 1934. Native marriages may now be registered.

LABOUR MIGRATION

Although it is generally recognised that labour migration has been an

(1) Without initiation rites and full ceremonial, e.g. post-initiation intercourse.

increasingly potent cause of change in family structure and has affected many other institutions among the Bemba and other people in Northern Rhodesia, precise data in respect of migrants, their age, and tribal and territorial distribution are not available. Estimates prepared for the Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Financial and Economic Position of Northern Rhodesia give the following average number of Northern Rhodesian African workers in European employment:-(1)

	In Northern Rhodesia	*Outside Northern Rhodesia*	*Total*
1927	43,314	36,873	80,187
1936	53,462	51,212	104,674

The Report points out that the figure of those employed outside Northern Rhodesia, i.e. in Southern Rhodesia, Tanganyika, the Rand and the Congo, is an under-estimate and that the actual number is probably considerably higher. As the total number of tax-paying males is estimated at 288,000, of whom not more than 170,000 are fit for hard manual labour, the high incidence of migrancy becomes self-evident.

The Report states that "it is certain that the local economic opportunities are insufficient and that money can for the large majority only be earned by going abroad."(2) While it is clear that there are other motives, such as love of adventure, or family tensions, underlying the decision to engage in migrant labour, economic pressure is the overriding cause. The actual incidence of migrancy varies widely, depending on local economic conditions; districts situated along the railway lines or, as in part of the Northern Province, where income can be obtained from fishing, having generally a smaller proportion of migrants.

The length of time the men are away from home probably varies considerably, and here again, precise data are lacking. The mines around Ndola and at Broken Hill are the largest single employers of migrant labour. In 1936 they employed 15,137, which is 28.3% of the total number of Native workers employed in the Territory.

The following figures for the whole of the labour intake of the Northern Rhodesian mines give some idea of the overall picture in 1937:-

Period of Absence	*Percentage*	*Number*
Up to 6 months	43.98	8,372
6 months - 2 years	28.02	5,332
2 - 3 years	11.71	2,230
Over 3 years	16.28	3,097

The estimates given by District Commissioners of the proportion of adult males normally absent from their homes show a considerable variation in different districts, ranging from 12% in Mkushi to 40-70% in Mporokoso. The following are the estimates of male absentees in the three Northern

(1) Except where otherwise stated, these and other figures are from Pim, 1938, pp.35, 36, 357.

(2) ibid., p.37.

167 Province districts in which the majority of the Bemba live:-(1)
464

Kasama	50%
Chinsali	29%
Mpika	30%

Estimates for other districts containing some Bemba are:-

Abercorn	49%
Isoka	Not given
Mporokoso	60-70%
Luwingu	20%

It must be stressed that these estimates are not based on precise data. But despite the fact that the figures are only approximate, the general conclusion as to the large extent of migrancy is not in doubt.

In 1937 the three districts(2) in which the majority of Bemba live contributed 21.9% (1937 men) of all Northern Province labour (8,752) to the Copperbelt, and 11.3% of the total labour force employed on the Copperbelt (17,128 men). The contribution of all districts containing some Bemba(3) represented 46.5% (4,071 men) of all Northern Province labour and 23.8% of all labour.

167 Marriage and the family are affected by this high rate of migration
593 of marriageable males. As in other parts of Africa where this system of migratory labour is prevalent, the absence of the man naturally leads to a loosening of the marriage tie. Women left alone for three or four years contract other unions in their husbands' absence. The amount of land that can be put under cultivation is also reduced and the economic condition of the wife and children is inevitably worsened. There are, however, certain factors inherent in the matrilineal system which do not apply in the patrilineal areas to the east and south. Bemba society does not recognise a stable residential unit based on the kinship of its male members as do the patrilineal Ngoni to the east, and the absentee men have fewer permanent ties to bind them to a particular village at home and seem to have a less developed sense of allegiance to such villages. Moreover, the marriage contract in this area depends, as we have seen, on the giving of service to the father-in-law rather than the payment of money or goods. This service cannot be given when the young husband is at the mines, and a small monetary payment of about 10/- is given in lieu. The whole process

(1) *The Annual Report on African Affairs* for 1948 gives the following figures for that year for the three Bemba districts:-

Individual District	*% taxable males absent*	*% employed in Northern Rhodesia*	*% employed outside Northern Rhodesia*
Kasama	53.55	17.06	36.49
Chinsali	39.54	10.74	28.8
Mpika	28.62	3.9	24.72
Average	40.47	10.56	30.00

(2) Kasama, Chinsali, Mpika.
(3) Kasama, Chinsali, Mpika, Abercorn, Isoka, Mporokoso, Luwingu.

167 by which a young son-in-law is gradually incorporated into his wife's group
593 is therefore altered. The young wife remains behind with her own people and not with her in-laws and thus, perhaps, is in a happier position than she would be in a patrilineal society; but Read considers that the brides are better looked after among the patrilineal Ngoni, where a woman's in-laws have made a considerable marriage payment for her and conceive it to be their duty to look after her while her husband is away.(1)

AGE SETS AND ASSOCIATIONS

561 Age is not stressed as a principle of social grouping. Precedence is
[881] reckoned on the basis of seniority and, as among other peoples, there are special terms for the various stages of life, but there are no boys' initiation ceremonies and no regiments based on age such as are found among the Nilo-Hamitic groups in East Africa. The existence of certain occupational
575 groups, as fishing communities, and of associations, such as those of iron-workers among the Aushi and Chishinga, has already been noted. While there are no secret societies among the Bemba, the Twa in the swamps of Bangweulu were renowned for *Butwa*, a secret society whose influence at one time extended the length of the Luapula river on both banks as far as Lake Mweru. Among the tribes affected by the cult were the Aushi, Unga, Shila, Tabwa in the group at present under consideration, and also the Lamba and Lunda.(2) It is suggested that in its original form *Butwa* is now extinct,(3) but it is uncertain whether it still exists in a modified form. Membership was not restricted by age or sex and people were initiated into the mysteries at a festival which lasted several days. The avowed aims of the society were to suppress selfishness and promote social life and its main attractions seem to have been dancing, singing, beer drinks and sexual licence; there was also considerable prestige attached to the ability to converse in the secret language *Lubendo*.

LOCAL AND TERRITORIAL GROUPING

361 The basic residential group is the village - a collection of 30 to 50 huts in the case of a commoner and several times this number in the case of a chief. All these peoples live in villages rather than isolated homesteads, but the size of the villages and their propinquity vary widely from area to area; Bemba villages, for instance, are often 16 to 20 miles apart.

621 The village normally develops as a kinship unit. It can come into
624 existence when a middle-aged or elderly man feels he has a sufficient following of relatives to justify his application to the chief for permission to set up a community of his own. While it is generally built close to relatives, the abundance of land makes it possible to build anywhere within the chief's administrative district. The nucleus is the headman's own matrilocal extended family composed of his young married daughters and their children, together with members of his matrilineage such as his widowed sisters and their sons and daughters. The number of relatives attached to a headman varies with his popularity and efficiency. A man may also succeed to the headmanship of a village by taking the name of his maternal grandfather or maternal uncle by the *kupyanika* system already referred to (see p.15). A

(1) Quoted by Richards, 1940.
(2) Anon. N.A.D.A., 1948. (3) Brelsford, S, 1946, p.14.

chief may, however, put one of his own relatives as headman or headwoman over a village, and here the composition of the community will be very mixed, containing a group of royal relatives together with those belonging to the original village.

Enquiries in 1934 showed that 29% of the villages in the Paramount Chief's territory were new titles, 16% had had one previous holder of the headmanship, 10% two previous holders, and 40% three previous holders. In the case of Chief Nkula's district, new villages form 42%, those with one previous holder 9%, those with two previous holders 18% and those with thre 13%. The remaining villages in both cases were formed by the amalgamation of two or more old villages.(1)

All Bemba villages are, however, liable to change in personnel. Young boys leave to marry and may return again when they have become fathers. Men come from outside to marry girls in the village and may later take them away. The practice of shifting villages every few years provides opportunities for such changes in village composition.

The members of a village acknowledge the authority of a chief who rules over a district (*icalo*) which is a geographical unit with a more or less fixed boundary and name. According to Richards these date from the past and represent territories originally allotted to members of the royal clan. It is clear, however, that some further sub-divisions of territory have taker place. Brelsford gives examples of the division of a district by a chief, and its reallocation to his son instead of to his uterine nephew.(2) It is not quite clear how far the political territory, with a fixed name and boundary, exists amongst the smaller tribes in this area.

Each district has its own capital (*musumba*), where the chief lives, and forms a separate political unit. Its inhabitants pay tribute to the chief of the district and in the old days went to fight for him on request. Law cases are taken to the chief's capital for trial and each territory is a ritual unit in the sense that its chief performs the economic rites of the year for its inhabitants. The Paramount Chief, like the lesser chiefs, has his own territory which he administers, but the word "*icalo*" is also used for the whole of the Bemba country.

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The main political authorities are the headmen, known as the "owners" of villages, the district chiefs and the Paramount Chief. The headman derives his authority from his position as head of a kin group which gives him authority over them and the right of access to the ancestral spirits. He may be said to look after his villagers. As a senior kinsman he is responsible for the maintenance of discipline among the young; he directs communal forms of hunting and fishing. He hears cases informally and initiates the cycle of agricultural activities every year. Since land is not scarce the allocation of land for cultivation is not an important function of the headman, but he acts as arbitrator in any quarrels that may arise over its use. Ritually he offers prayers at a village shrine to his ancestors,

(1) Richards, 6, 1939. Appendix D. (2) Brelsford, 3, 1944

624 blessing the gardens before firing, the seeds before sowing, and the first fruits of a number of crops. He must organise the payment of tribute and labour to the district chief and pass on chiefly orders and requests. His privileges include the right to personal service from younger relatives and tribute of beer and/or meat. Primarily, however, the position is valued not for economic advantage but for the authority it brings, the command over a small following and the favour of a chief. The sanctions for this authority consist mainly in the headman's popularity, the strength of kinship ties between him and the villagers and their belief that it is dangerous to allow an elder relative to die while cherishing a sense of injury. Ultimately, of course, the headman's power depends on the support of his territorial chief and nowadays of the British Administration.

621 622 The functions of the different types of Bemba chief differ only in degree from those of the headman. Like a headman, a chief is in charge of his own village, his *musumba*, and he tries to maintain and augment this community by acquiring a reputation for popularity and generosity. A chief's village in the old days was described as having thousands of inhabitants. Big chiefs' villages observed by Richards in 1934 had 400 to 600 huts. They were divided into quarters (*fitenta*) ruled over by loyal supporters of the chief, known as *bafilolo*.

622 [692] [681] Besides administering his own village the chief was responsible for making and confirming the appointment of headmen; and presiding over a court composed of advisers mainly drawn from his own village. Witchcraft cases had to be brought to a chief and only the more important among them could administer the poison ordeal by *mwafi*. The chief could in the old days punish by savage mutilations and by selling a man into slavery. Economically the chief was responsible for initiating agricultural activities by performing the necessary rite at the time of tree-cutting, sowing or harvesting. With the tribute labour at his disposal he made big gardens and built granaries from which he fed his courtiers, messengers and workers. The chief [721] initiated military raids and other forms of warfare, and the great Bemba chiefs maintained their monopoly of Arab guns which they traded for slaves. Bemba country was, in fact, an area of strong centralised government. The chieftains of the Aushi, Unga and other associated tribelets were on a much smaller scale and weaker in political organisation.

[789] But the most important and characteristic activities of the Bemba chiefs are ritual. They are reckoned to have in their own persons power to bless and curse. They have to be protected from contact with death and to keep [763] sex taboos of various kinds for the welfare of the whole territory. It is probable that the Bemba Paramount Chief in the old days might have been described as a "divine king" in Frazer's sense of the word; he was strangled [761] when on the point of death so that his spirit should pass into the land. The Bemba chief derives his ritual power from the fact that he has succeeded to the names of dead chiefs and is thus enabled to call on a long line of ancestral spirits. Chiefs possess sacred relics - usually stools - which are 622 778 known as *babenye* and kept in special huts protected by "wives of the dead" or descendants of wives of earlier chiefs. An approach to the ancestral spirits is made at these shrines. Chiefs also sacrifice at the deserted shrines of their predecessors (*nfuba*) and at other spirit centres in the area.

Much of their power depends on the keeping of sex taboos and the

622 778 protection from pollution of the fire which is supposed to burn day and night in a special hut, at any rate in the Paramount Chief's capital. An elaborate ritual concerns the protection of the sacred relics and the fire, and a number of hereditary officials are engaged in this task.

622 While all chiefs in this group seem to have ritual powers as heads of ancestral cults, and most of them possess and look after sacred relics, it appears that the ritual is far more highly developed among the Bemba. In fact, among some of the scattered groups on the western border of the district, there are cases where the spiritual ownership of the land is in the hands of a descendant of the original owner and the chief himself has diminished supernatural power; but further research on this point is required.

643 The Paramount Chief among the Aushi(1) held both secular and spiritual power in his own hands, a state which was interrupted from 1900-1930 by quarrels over the succession, during which there was both an administrative and a religious head of the group. This is the normal state of affairs among the Unga(2) where the Paramount Chief has never held spiritual or religious power.

Types of Chief

622 643 644 Bemba chiefs succeed to fixed titles associated with the possession of sacred relics. The chieftainships are of different kinds. The major titles are held by members of the royal dynasty and the royal princes succeed to one after the other of these titles in turn. For instance, for half a century or so there was a tendency for the Paramount Chief, the *Citimukulu*, to be succeeded by the *Mwamba*, who was in turn succeeded by the *Nkolemfumu* and the latter by the *Mpepo*.(3) The paramount chieftaincy and the major territorial chiefdoms are held by close relatives within the royal dynasty, usually own brothers, parallel cousins, classificatory brothers, or sisters' sons. Some of the territorial chiefs have under them sub-chiefs whom they appoint themselves and who are either royal princes, or in some cases "sons of chiefs". Several chiefdoms are regularly inherited by sons of chiefs rather than by members of the royal Crocodile clan, and it appears that once a tract of land has been given by a chief to one of his sons it remains as a gift which the succeeding chief can give to his son rather than to his uterine nephew.

644 562 There are also at least two royal princesses, the *Candamukulu* and the *Mukukamfumu*, who succeed to fixed titles in the same way and who rule over group of villages rather than tracts of land. The position and power of the women of the Crocodile clan is one of the characteristic features of this area.

622 Lastly a few localised lines of chiefs, usually junior or ousted branches of the Crocodile clan, have established their rule over small

(1) Philpot, 1936; but in the Congo the Aushi have two chieftaincies or paramountcies. See Stiénon, 1926, p.59.
(2) Brelaford, 5, 1946.
(3) After a protracted succession dispute the *Nkula* succeeded to the paramount chieftaincy recently; see Brelaford, 3, 1944, and Richards, 7, 1940.

622 territories generally in the capacity of sub-chiefs. Subject chiefs of alien stock, generally of Bisa origin, also hold some chieftainships particularly in the west.

Cases of disputed succession were decided by a meeting composed of members of the royal family and the *bakabilo* or hereditary councillors. Disputed successions and feuds between one chief and another were common in the old days.

642 The succession to Bisa chieftainships also goes from brother to brother
622 and then to sister's son or sister's daughter's son, but the Bisa never
184 reached the same degree of centralisation; they live in more scattered groups and, before the arrival of the Europeans, had no Paramount Chief. Little is known of the political structure of the Aushi and the Unga, but they have certainly not achieved a centralised government, and some of the smaller Aushi chiefs are living on tiny islands in the Bangweulu swamps.

THE MACHINERY OF CENTRALIZATION

642 The Bemba can be reckoned as a more or less centralized State in that
643 its major chiefdoms are controlled by members of one royal family; its Paramount Chief had the command of the army and has the supreme control of supernatural power, the possession of the most sacred of the tribal relics and the right of appointment to lesser chiefdoms. He also provides the final judicial court of appeal.

643 The Paramount Chief and some of the biggest territorial chiefs have
645 attached to them a group of hereditary officials who combine ritual with political and judicial functions. In the case of the Paramount Chief these officials, the *bakabilo*, number between 35 and 40 and form an advisory council on special matters of state. They include the hereditary officials in charge of the chief's relics (*babeny*), the royal buriers and embalmers (*bafingo*) and a number of other officials carrying out special ritual functions in connection with the ceremonial of kingship. These *bakabilo* are in a very powerful position. They are hereditary heads of villages near the capital; they are immune from giving tribute to the chief; they used to wear special head-dresses; they must keep the same sex-taboos as the chief, and are buried in the central district under his control. The real *bakabilo* are those connected with the Paramount's court. They are in fact called "the *Babemba*". The *bakabilo* of the *citimukulu* bury all the major chiefs and they act as regents at the death of the Paramount; any matter of tribal importance, such as a succession dispute, is placed before them. They check the power of the Paramount, since they can, and sometimes do, refuse to perform the ritual on which he depends for the exercise of his power. Being hereditary officials with lines of descent as old as that of the Paramount Chief himself they cannot be removed at will. They form a central tribal council but not a public assembly such as the *pitso* of the Sotho-speaking peoples.

622 Each chief has certain executive officials to support him. These in-
624 clude the *bafilolo* or heads of the divisions of a capital, who maintain peace in the royal village, organise tribute labour and allocate land for cultivation. They are appointed from among the chief's own favourites and supporters. Each big chief had formerly a number of captains or *bashika* of whom some were hereditary AND most were Appointed At the chief's will.

500 whom some were hereditary and most were appointed at the chief's will.

CHANGES IN POLITICAL ORGANIZATION INTRODUCED BY EUROPEAN CONTACT

622 642 In 1900 North-eastern Rhodesia came under the control of the British South Africa Company which had its headquarters at Kasama. While the chiefs were recognised, their functions were gradually taken over by the Administration and new courts of law administering a mixture of European and native law were set up under British magistrates. Chiefs were used largely as executive officials bereft of authority and privileges.

In 1924 Northern Rhodesia became a British Protectorate and in 1929 a modified form of "indirect rule" was introduced into the area by the Native Authority and the Native Courts Ordinance of 1929, subsequently modified in 1936. Chiefs, and in some instances chiefs' councils, were constituted Native Authorities, whereby they were given juridical powers over specific territories and encouraged to issue orders on matters such as village constitution, native movements, bush burning, *et al.* Native courts were also recognised and given jurisdiction over all cases except murder, witchcraft and issues implicating Europeans. The chiefs were given salaries - small in comparison with those received by other chiefs in Northern Rhodesia(1) and inadequate to their needs(2) - but which were, at any rate, indications of Government support. Native treasuries were set up in 1937.

Bemba chiefs had never lost their authority completely during the period of "direct rule", probably owing to the continuing strength of the people's belief in their ritual powers. They were no longer able to rely for their power on military success or the right of mutilating their subjects for offences, but the new measures gave them considerable government backing. But the poverty of the chiefs under modern conditions prevented the machinery of government from functioning. The old rulers were asked to carry out new executive duties but their councillors and messengers became increasingly unwilling and unable to serve them. Formerly they were fed by the chief while doing his work, but today the Government's discouragement, if not actual prohibition, of tribute labour, prevents the accumulation of food at the capital. It became necessary here as elsewhere to introduce some form of payment for court officials. The *bakabilo* were recognised as an advisory council in 1936 and it seems likely that judicial court officials will be paid in increasing numbers. Similar changes are probably taking place in other areas.

RELIGIOUS AND MAGICAL BELIEFS

(a) GODS OUTSIDE THE ANCESTRAL CULT.

776 In common with other central Bantu peoples, the Bemba and Bisa believe there is a high god, *Lesa*, who lives in the sky, controls thunder, sends

(1) £60 p.a., as compared with £1,700 for the Barotse chief. See Richards, 7, 1940, p.116.
(2) See Richards, 3, 1935.

776 children to men and is the original source of magic power. *Lesa* is not, however, the object of any cult and is never directly addressed by the Bemba.(1) There is some suggestion that *Lesa* is believed to act as a judge of the dead, but it is not clear how far this is a reflection of Christian teaching.

778 825 Shrines are put up in Bemba country to a hunting god, *Mulenga*, thought to be the spirit of a forgotten ancestor. There are also traces of serpent worship in two or three centres in Bemba country where sacrifices are made to pythons believed to live in caves or near waterfalls.

The Aushi believe in *Makumba*, a tribal god. While only chiefs and priests have seen him, he is generally thought to be small - about two feet in height - black and hard like stone. *Makumba* is very closely bound up with the idea of paramountcy among the Aushi but is clearly much more than mere "insignia of office"; he is worshipped and offerings are made to him; he is conceived both as a god and as a person, and is served by his own priests and priestesses. His association with the history of Aushi has already been mentioned. (See above p.8.)

(b) THE ANCESTRAL CULT

769 Some reference has been made in preceding sections to the ancestral spirits. Many ceremonies are connected with them and the part played by ancestral spirits in general and those of chiefs, and especially of the Paramount Chief, is the core of Bemba religion. These spirits (*Mupashi*, pl. *Imipashi*) are worshipped on all the chief occasions of the agricultural year, particularly at tree-cutting and harvest time, and also in times of tribal disaster or emergency. It may be remarked in passing that the ritual practices associated with these occasions were formerly very elaborate but are now being carried out with diminishing ceremonial and by fewer people, even though the beliefs behind the practices still seem to be dominant in the minds of the people.

769 778 The *Imipashi* are to be approached in certain well-defined ways among which are the calling of their names, prayers, and offerings of material objects. They may be invoked at the following places: firstly, the hut of every householder serves as a shrine, since his own ancestral spirits tend to linger there in the half-light of dawn and dusk to be invoked at the crises of life: birth, marriage, illness and death. In some areas food is placed for their appeasement but there is not, as among the Ila, a separate part of the hut set aside for them. The focal point of religious activity in the village is the headman's hut or a small shrine built outside it. Here the spirits of the headman's ancestors are invoked in all matters concerning the wider welfare of the village. In some areas shrines are put up to the spirits of the former owners of the land who are addressed by the village headman.(2)

(1) The position described by Smith and Dale in *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* is very similar.

(2) Among the Unga priests operate independently of the chiefs; the fusion of secular and spiritual authority is not so complete as it is among the Bemba. For details see Brelsford, 5, 1946, Chap.XI.

769 Spirits are also worshipped, as has been mentioned, at the chiefs'
778 relic huts, at the sites of dead chiefs' villages, which are revered as spirit centres, and at remarkable natural objects such as caves and waterfalls (*ngulu*) which are also thought to be spirit centres. Major chiefs are buried in a sacred grove guarded with great care by a priest, the
[782] *shimwalule*. This is the home of the most powerful tribal spirits and an animal used to be sacrificed here on the rare occasions when drought was
[787] threatened. The spirits of the chiefs also manifest themselves in the presence of possessed men and women who prophesy and heal. Ancestral spirits are approached by the man or woman who has succeeded to their name and guardian spirit, that is to say, the head of a small local lineage, a headman or a chief.

769 Ancestral spirits are addressed after a ritual sex act between the
782 officiant and his wife, followed by ceremonial purification. The spirits
783 are addressed by name and some form of sacrifice, e.g. beer, cloth, flour and chickens, is offered to them.

(c) MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT

789 Bemba and Bisa believe in the potency of *bwanga* which may be translated as "magic". Bemba magical rites depend for the most part on medicine (*muti*), usually part of a plant or tree, sometimes with the addition of energizing charms giving potency to the medicine. Words are sometimes used but, as with the Azande, there is less insistence on and less importance attached to the spell than to the rite and the medicines. It is the magician (*Ng'anga*) who procures and uses the medicine and from whom it may be purchased. To ensure effectiveness the *Ng'anga* must invoke *Lesa*, without whose consent the medicines are thought to be ineffectual.

Magic is used for general protective purposes - to ensure fertility, good health and luck, to give staying power to food. In the economic sphere magic seems to be used less among the Bemba than the Bisa. Richards suggests that the greater development of the ancestral cult among the former is the reason for this.(1)

754 Magic is also used in divination. The commonest form of divination
787 is the rubbing of an axe over a skin until it sticks in answer to a question, and boiling of medicine in a pot until the mixture bubbles over one side or the other side. Another characteristic form of Bemba divination is the hunting ritual used to ascertain the cause of a person's death, according to whether a male or female animal is first driven into the hunting nets. This rite can be used as a preliminary test for witchcraft. In the old days the *lilemfia*, or war fetish, originally obtained from the Lunda chiefs near Lake Mweru was employed. This was a horn placed on a spike which was
[278] thought only to work if smeared with the blood of a human victim. *Mwafi*, the poison used as a test for witchcraft from the Southern Sudan to Southern Rhodesia, was used by the senior chiefs in this area.

754 Evil magic, or sorcery, was distinguished as *buloshi*, a term which covers witchcraft, in the sense of inborn power, as well as the manipulation

(1) Richards, 6, 1939, pp.356, 187.

754 of magical forces in sorcery. The *muloshi* is a man who kills without rhyme or reason, an enemy of society who kills from a distance, who is associated with black birds and who steals parts of the body from newly dug graves.(1) Enemies may also be killed by the use of medicine, either apparently by an evilly disposed person or by the *Ng'anga* who may be employed to defend someone who believes he is attacked.(2)

831 372 *Sex and Fire.* Characteristic of this group of peoples is the series of beliefs associated with the magic potency of sex when used according to certain rules, and, connected with this, the danger of the pollution of domestic fires or the fires of chiefs by contact with adulterers or evil livers. Such beliefs are the basis of the multiplication of small protective rites associated with chieftainship, the bringing-up of children, and the girls' initiation ceremony.(3)

SOME IMPORTANT RITUALS

788 241 The most important ceremonies carried out amongst the Bemba are as follows:-

(1) *Economic Rites.* At the time of the firing of the bush the chief or headman places an axe at the head of his bed at night or, in the case of a chief, in the relic shrine. Sowing ceremonies at the Paramount's capital used to be elaborate, but are now reduced to the placing of seeds in the relic shrines; similar ceremonies are done by headmen. The first-fruits rites, when the tasting of the new crops takes place, were also formerly elaborate among the Bemba. They are still carried out in an abbreviated form at the capital, and headmen place in their small spirit huts portions of each new crop.

766 782 (2) *Ceremonial in Chieftainship.* The most elaborate forms of ceremonial amongst the Bemba are those that surround the burial of a dead chief, the installation of his successor and the moving of his village. In the old days the death of a Paramount Chief was concealed for a few days while his followers fled from the capital and the sacred relics were moved to a place of safety. The ritual buriers then took charge and dried the body and covered it with a sauce made of beans, carefully preserving the toe and finger nails. After a year the corpse was carried round the Paramount's territory and human victims were sacrificed on each spot where the body rested at night. The body was then carried across the Chambasi river where it was received by the *shimwalule* who carried it into the sacred grove. The favourite wives of the chief and some of his slaves were put into the grave to hold the body of the *Citimukulu* and were stifled as the earth was filled in. Although cattle are not kept in the area, the body was wrapped in the skin of an ox.

643 The installation of a chief is a similarly complex process, in which all the *bakabilo* and *bafingo* play their part. Important elements were the transfer of the sacred relics to the new capital, the lighting of the chief's new fire, and the installation of his head wife. Details of this form of ceremonial are not available from the associated tribes, but it is certain that

(1) For some comments on the relation between witchcraft and psychopathology, see Davidson, 1949.
(2) Richards, 2, 1935. (3) Richards, 7, 1940.

643 nothing like the year long burial rites of the *Citisukulu* exist in these areas.

881 (3) *Girls' Initiation Ceremony.* As has been mentioned, the initiation of boys is not here practised, but there is a form of girls' puberty ritual (*cisungu*) which is, in essence, a nubility rite. Formerly it lasted from two to three months, although the ceremony witnessed by Richards in 1934 was completed in six weeks. It consists in the seclusion of the girls during a series of mimetic rites representing their duties as cook, gardener, hostess and mother, which are carried out in the initiation hut and also in the surrounding bush. The girl is also given a series of some 40 to 50 pottery images (*mbusa*), which are associated with special songs and refer to aspects of the legal obligations of marriage. The girl is presented with these pottery images on the last night of the ceremony, after having jumped over a hoop made of crossed branches. The ceremony directly precedes marriage and is, in fact, a part of the marriage ceremonial. The bridegroom plays a part on the last night of the initiation ceremony when he shoots an arrow at a spot on the wall of the initiation hut. The formal consummation of the marriage takes place next day. *Cisungu* ceremonies of a similar kind are mentioned as existing among the Bisa, but have not yet been described.

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Senga

VI. A NOTE ON THE SENGA

(A Tumbuka-ised offshoot of the Bisa
in the upper Luangwa valley)

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POPULATION AND DISTRIBUTION

No figures specific to the Senga are available but Moffat Thomson[1] gives a figure of 67,477 for both Senga and Nsenga, while Poole gives 44,000 for the Nsenga in 1930. This suggests a figure of 23,000 for the Senga.

A rough idea of the density of population may be found in the figures for administrative districts in 1934[2] and in 1947 (c).[2]

	1934		1947
Chinsali	3.46	per square mile	3.7
Lundazi	5.49	" " "	5.9

A number of Senga share Northern reserve no. 13 with other groups.

LANGUAGE

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The difference between the Senga and the Nsenga is to be seen in language, although confusion has obscured the difference for some years. For instance, Madan's[3] *Senga Handbook* actually refers to the Nsenga, as does Ranger's *Chinsenga Grammar*,[4] although it is not clear from the latter's preface whether he includes the Senga and thus confuses them. Doke[5] makes no reference to Senga as distinct from Nsenga, but whether from lack of material or from the belief that there was no distinction is not clear. Guthrie,[6] however, draws a distinction. While he places both Senga and Nsenga in the same linguistic zone, Senga is considered to be a dialect of Tumbuka while Nsenga is a language in a different group, more closely related to languages spoken in Portuguese East Africa. While paucity of information on Senga precludes anything more than this tentative classification, the available evidence suggests a fairly well marked linguistic difference between the two.

HISTORY

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Tribal traditions seem to agree that the Senga originally migrated eastwards from the Luapula in company with the Bisa, of whom indeed they formed a part.[7] After a period spent near Lake Bangweulu, from which they were dislodged by Bemba raids, they crossed the Luangwa river about 1800, a date tentatively suggested by Poole. On their arrival here there seems to have been considerable intermarriage with the Tumbuka on the plateau to the east of the river, as a result of which some similarity to Tumbuka customs may be expected.

Bemba and Ngoni raids seem always to have been a menace, even in the

(1) Moffat Thomson, 1934.
(2) Pim, 1938, and *Report of the Financial Relationship Committee*, 1949.
(3) Madan, 1905.
(4) Ranger, 1928.
(5) Doke, 1945.
(6) Guthrie, 1948.
(7) Poole, 1934.

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Senga

valley, and the substantial stockades of Senga chiefs on which Fraser[1] commented bore witness to the fear in which these raiders were held.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

As stated above the Senga inhabit the Upper Luangwa valley, at an altitude of some 3,000 ft. decreasing to the south. It is a region for which adequate climatological data are not available but the rainfall is probably less than on the Plateau with an average of 30-35" annually. The probable temperature range is from 65°F. (mean min.) to 88°F. (mean max.).

The soils generally are more fertile than those on the Plateau, especially close to the river, and are of a heavier texture and darker colour. A type of woodland (*Isoberlinia - Globiflora - brachystegia*) common to the Plateau is found on the western banks of the Luangwa, but the valley floor and the eastern banks are covered with *Mopane* scrub-land, in which the trees attain a fair height near the river but are stunted towards the escarpment.

MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY

The shifting cultivation on the sterile soils of the Plateau gives way in the valley, potentially at any rate, to semi-permanent cultivation. Maize, finger millet and Kaffir corn are the most important crops, each of which is found locally as a staple. There are various sequences, from a millet-Kaffir corn sequence in northern districts to a millet-Kaffir corn or maize-groundnut sequence in districts in contact with the mixed Bisa-Cewa groups of the Middle Luangwa and on the eastern banks towards Lundazi.

In both sequences new sites are first cleared of trees and the branches and brushwood burnt. Later, in the first sequence, the grass which grows up in the clearing is cut down and left to rot helped by the first rain; this forms the seed bed for the millet - some maize had already been scattered before the grass was cut - and little subsequent weeding is carried out. Kaffir corn may be sown in the following year or, alternatively, in the third year after a second millet crop. A few pumpkins and cucurbits are also found.

In the second sequence, after preliminary clearing, there is less tendency to use rotting grass as a seed bed, but to leave it standing to manure subsequent crops. Millet is planted with maize and in the following year kaffir corn and maize are planted in varying proportions in a seed bed of grass-manure left from the previous year. In some areas maize may be planted alone and a simple millet-maize sequence carried on for up to ten years. On lighter soils groundnuts may be planted in the third year.

Apart from this groundnuts are normally grown in separate gardens. Small gardens for maize in the dry season and rice cultivation are locally found, as is tobacco, particularly in Chinsali district. Village gardens are not properly found in the area but small plots of sweet potatoes, cassava, beans and pawpaw are commonly found near villages.

(1) Fraser, 1914.

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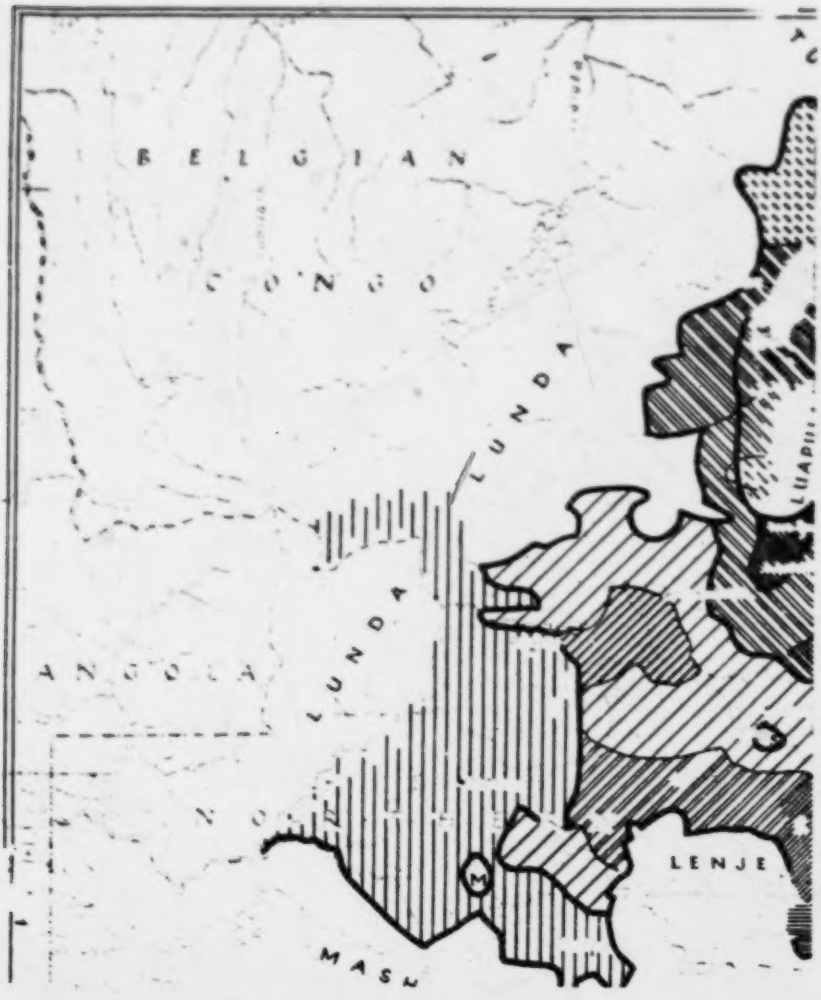

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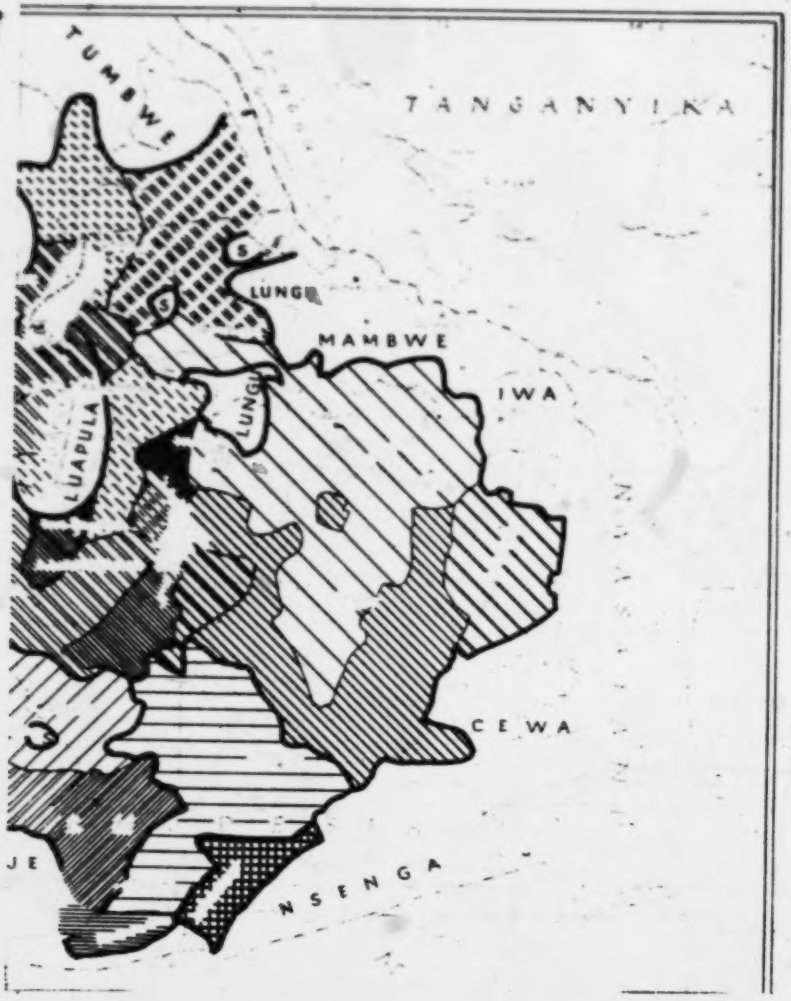
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